and Sundergarh Districts. The other details are as under:

Sl. No.	Name of the Mines	Date of closure	No. of workers Involved	Name of mines in which all the affected workers have been absorbed
1.	Gandhamardan 'A'	26.12.95	124	Gandhamardan Bl. 'B'
2.	Kalaparbat	10.7.96	52	Different mines of the lessee
3.	Balita	10.7.96	25	Baitarani Iron Ore mines

(d) and (e) All the workers affected by closure of the mines have already been employed in other mines of the lessees.

Welfare projects for working children under the Grants-in-aid scheme in Gujarat

1693. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether voluntary agencies are being assisted financially for taking up Welfare projects for working children under the Grants-in-aid scheme by Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of voluntary agencies presently being financial assisted in the State of Gujarat under the scheme;

(d) whether Government propose to increase the grant to voluntary agencies of the State; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) to (e) Voluntary and Non-Governmental Organisations are financially assisted to the extent of 75% of the project cost under the scheme of "Grants-in-aid to voluntary organisation" for taking up action oriented projects for the benefit of child labour. The project activities include measures for prevention of child labour, improved working conditions of child labour through extension of welfare facilities like non-formal education, provision of vocational training, health check etc. Proposals received from registered voluntary and non-governmental organisations duly recommended by the State Governments are considered for financial assistance under the scheme. During 1995-96, a total 24 voluntary organisations were assisted under this scheme for implementation of different projects. However, no voluntary agencies from Gujarat had availed financial assistance under the scheme.

Policies for investments in the mining sector

1694. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to develop and adopt transport policies to facilitate investments in the mining sector;

(b) if so, the details of the foreign and Indian private companies which have shown interest in the mining sector of the country;

(c) whether Government have set any norms and conditions for private participation in mining sector; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL & MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) In mining sector grant of Prospectin Licence (PL) and Mining Leases (ML) i governed by Mines & Mineral (Regulation & Development) Act, 195

as amended in 1994 and the rules made thereunder. As such transparency is already ensured while granting mineral concessions.

(b) In the mining and mentallurgical sector, Foreign Investment Promotion Board has cleared 32 cases between January to September, 1996. Details of applications/proposals made to State Governments are not maintained by the Central Government.

(c) and (d) Participation of the private sector in mining projects is as per the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 as amended in 1994 and the rules made thereunder.

Increase in prices of deregulated grades of coal

1695. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Coal India Limited has increased the price of deregulated grades of coal;

(b) if so, since when and the circustances which led to the increase in the prices of coal;

(c) whether Government are aware of the implications of increasing of coal prices on the cocnomy of the poor people; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to avoid the frequent increase of coal prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government of India have deregulated the prices of coking coal and A, B and C grades of non-coking coal with effect from 22.3.96. The Coal India Limited who are competent to fix the prices of deregulated grades of coal thereafter have increased the prices of these varieties of coal with effect from 1.4.96 and again on 20.10.96. The prices were increased to offset the increased cost of production.

(c) The impact of last price revision on wholesale price index is 0.2% only.

(d) Does not arise in view of the answer to part (c) of the question.

Distribution of Rice and Wheat Through PDS

1696. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any norms for the distribution of rice and wheat through the PDS have been prescribed;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the decision taken by the recently held conference of State Ministers for Civil Supplies in Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) Allocation of foodgrains, that is, rice and wheat for the Public Distribution System (PDS) from the Central Pool is made to various States/UTs on a month to month basis taking into account overall availability of stocks in the Central Pool, relative needs of various States/UTs, market availability, offtake trends, seasonal factors and other related factors.

(c) The Conference of State Food & Civil Supplies Ministeries held in New Delhi on 7th August, 1996 discussed the matter of "Streamlining the Public Distribution System with focus on poor". The Conference unanimously endorsed the proposal for targeting the PDS on the poor and providing specially subsidised foodgrains to the population below poverty line and recommended that the Central Government may bring in this targeted PDS into force as soon as possible.